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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the operational features of the initial phases of the Kamehameha Early Education Project (KEEP). The rationale for KEEP's focus on conducting research on programs similar to those in the public schools rather than on developing radically innovative educational programs is discussed. Start up procedures such as recruitment of staff and selection of students are described briefly. Goals of the first year's research project, examining the effects of teacher inservice training, are noted. (JMB)

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The Kamehameha Schools/Bernice P. Bishop Estate

Ronald Gallimore, Roland G. Tharp & Gisela E. Speidel,
General Editors

Operational Features of the Kamehameha Early Education Project.

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Production Editor

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The Kamehameha Early Education Program

The Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) is a research and development program of The Kamehameha Schools/Bernice P. Bishop Estate. The mission of KEEP is the development, demonstration, and dissemination of methods for improving the education of Hawaiian and Part-Hawaiian children. These activities are conducted at the Ka Na'i Pono Research and Demonstration School, and in public classrooms in cooperation with the State Department of Education. KEEP projects and activities involve many aspects of the educational process, including teacher training, curriculum development, and child motivation, language, and cognition. More detailed descriptions of KEEP's history and operations are presented in Technical Reports #1-4.

Abstract

This report summarizes the operational features of the initial phases of the Kamehameha Early Education Project.

Technical Report #4

Operational Features of the Kamehameha Early Education Project[1]

Ronald Gallimore Roland G. Tharp Gisela E. Speidel

In Technical Report #3, we sketched the general structure and functional features of KEEP as it was originally conceived. In this report, we will deal with operational principles which we used during the first two years of KEEP.

From the outset, the priority goal was to establish the Demonstration School. Until we had a base of operations, a mechanism for developing and researching ideas, and a fund of evaluated findings, no effort was made to begin consultation activities. In any event, surveying the public schools to find suitable and receptive communities required 15 months, a portion of which was spent in careful negotiation with public school officials and community residents.

Beginning a new school from scratch is no easy job. The KEEP Demonstration School was "founded" before it had facilities, students, teachers, administrators, a curriculum, and all of the other components, human and otherwise, that are required in any school, however different. A major goal of our first two years has been to assemble and organize these components. A basic concept of KEEP was to make the entire operation research-oriented, concerned with collecting data, testing ideas, evaluating techniques, etc. To be certain that this orientation

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[1]Preparation of this report was partially supported by the Sociobehavioral Research Group, MRRC, UCLA.

was not diluted by the pressures of day-to-day operational problems, the individual responsible for day-to-day matters in this school had to be conversant with, and committed to, the principles of controlled research and systematic evaluation. When there is a conflict between research activities and program procedures, the decision-maker may not appreciate the implications of some actions for a specific research enterprise. It has been our experience that decisions which may preclude or adversely affect research activities are more likely a result of the numerous and conflicting pressures brought to bear on an administrator, rather than hostility or indifference to research. Indeed, the problems usually involve such matters as scheduling and administrative convenience, rather than value disagreements.

In practice, the KEEP operation has not separated research and educational activities. Research is used to evaluate options that might be adopted either at the Demonstration School or in the Consultation Program. The Demonstration School teachers have been trained to do research and encouraged to carry on projects; at KEEP, most "experimenters" are also teachers.

KEEP: A Fact Finding Mechanism, Not a Sales Program

From the beginning, visiting colleagues asked to see our "program". We eventually understood that they expected us to have a model, a curriculum, a set of materials: something radical, or at least novel. We were expected to proselitize, as well. It is true that most Demonstration Schools and "experimental programs" have something to sell; indeed, most were organized to develop and evaluate some pre-selected curriculum. It is also the case that successful programs (and sometimes not

so successful efforts) are usually advocated with enthusiasm by the personnel involved.

Visitors at KEEP were suprised to see that our classrooms did not appear very different from any public DOE classroom. When colleagues learn that the similarities were deliberately planned, they are incredulous. There is no shortage of imaginative new programs in Hawaii. It was our intention to create a program that fills another need; only KEEP has the resources to expend on careful and continuous research and evaluation. In education, lack of imagination is not really a problem; the problem is the lack of facts.

The public school system of Hawaii has, over the past decade, invested considerable resources in new programming. Hawaiian educators are accepting of innovations and willing to try new approaches. But there is a need for sustained research and evaluation of the specific effects of programming, new or traditional. KEEP was conceived to solve this problem. What are the effects of various curriculum components? Does "pidgin" or Hawaiian Islands Creole interfere with learning to read Standard English? Are Island children retarded in language development? What kind of classroom organization works best in culturally heterogeneous classroom; or with Hawaiian-American children? Do some motivation systems work better than others for Hawaiian-Americans, or for other culture groups? What skills do teachers need to work effectively in heterogeneous situations? These and other questions are the target of KEEP.

To attack these problems requires an organization quite different from those usually associated in education with the terms "demonstration

school", "experimental classroom", and the like. KEEP was developed to do continuous research and evaluation, working on new problems as old investigations are completed. We do not intend to develop any single, generalized educational package. The KEEP staff has to accept that they will never solve "the" problems--rather than they will become, hopefully, more effective problem-solvers and more effective researchers. As new problems are defined and new program ideas emerge from the State Department of Education, from the universities and colleges, from the Hawaii Curriculum Center, and from other sources, including KEEP itself, KEEP will maintain an agenda.

The Demonstration School is an image of a public school because it is in the public schools that the problems occur and must be solved. If KEEP had devised a radical program, the crucial research and evaluation could not have been accomplished because the research results would have reflected a very special situation, not the educational realities faced by Hawaiian-American students. Thus, every effort was made to incorporate all the best that we could find in the public schools of Hawaii into the initial planning of the Demonstration School. KEEP staff visited approximately 30 public schools and over 100 classrooms. Observations of classroom operations and collections of materials were used as the fundamental guide for development of the KEEP curriculum. Consultations with public school personnel were obtained at every phase, from building plans to reading program. In fact, the actual cost per square foot of KEEP is somewhat less than the average cost to the State for a school in Honolulu; the teacher-pupil ratio at KEEP (in the classroom at any given time) is identical to the public schools; the health and safety rules are the same; etc. Thus, in the end, we hoped to have a "real"

public school organized to do intensive and continuous research--a public school operated by behavioral scientists.

The preceding research in Leeward Oahu (Technical Report #2) had suggested that significant improvements in student adjustment and performance could be obtained within existing public school models. These preliminary results indicated that problem situations could be improved by increasing teacher skills, rather than doing drastic surgery on programs and materials. But, if the conventional school is operated by the best teachers, under ideal conditions, will this effectively educate young Hawaiian-Americans? To what extent are specific curricular and program elements necessary? These are the research questions that have guided our operations.

The First Year

The Demonstration School enrolled one class of kindergarten-aged children each year. At the end of the third grade at KEEP, the children are to return to regular DOE schools.

The first year saw KEEP operating in temporary quarters--in the lounges of old dormatories of the Kamehameha Kapalama campus. One class of 28 children was recruited.

The principal investigators (Tharp and Gallimore) recruited an able and varied staff of educators (Cachola, anthropologists (Boggs and Mays), teachers (Granger, Au, Suecka, and Chun), sociolinguist (Day), and a project coordinator psychologist (Speidel), as well as graduate students from the University of Hawaii and UCLA.

Training and coordination of this staff became a primary focus. During succeeding years, the staff has grown in proportion to the annual additional class of students.

During the first year, a major accomplishment was the construction of the permanent KEEP site in upper Kalihi.

The First Year's Research

Thus, the initial KEEP Demonstration School program was based on the best the public schools had to offer. To this we added one significant departure, which was our first major research. We organized an in-service training program for KEEp teachers, focusing on the skills of classroom research procedures and practice, principles of behavior, and classroom observation and management. We expected to find that significant gains in student motivation, adjustment, and achievement could be obtained by operating a standard "good" public school classroom, with teachers who were provided special training. This training--in observation, behavior analysis, and classroom research--would serve to sensitize the teachers to cultural, as well as individual differences (see Technical Report #2).

The techniques used in the training and an overview of the staff training are presented in Technical Report #7. An analysis of our studies of student motivation are presented in Technical Report #6. Reports of the studies undertaken by, or involving, the KEEP teachers during 1972-73 are presented in Technical Reports #8-16. In Technical Report #5, we present an overall evaluation of the 1972-73 program year.

Assembling The People

Recruitment of staff followed a normal pattern. Announcement of vacancies was placed in public schools and in the local newspapers. The teaching staff (their title, "Educational Specialists [ES]" reflects the wide range of their tasks) was composed in the initial years of all certified teachers, ranging from 1 to 15 years of experience in elementary education. A principal criterion of selection was an evaluative orientation to teaching and education, rather than, for example, commitment or expertise in some phase of education or a particular program or approach.

The selection of students was a more difficult task. We intended to have a class representative of a "typical" kindergarten in the local public schools of the Kalihi area. Administrative difficulties would have been created for local principals had we taken an already composed kindergarten from the nearby public schools. Thus, we had to draw children from several catchment areas, while relying on sampling techniques to make the class a representative one. A thorough review of the selection procedure is presented in Technical Report #13. The initial class was composed of 12 males and 16 females; 12 of the 28 were known definitely to have attended a preschool; half of the group had two or more siblings; the average age was 62.5 months; only three came from families without someone in the father role; the majority had one or both parents working; the majority of fathers were semi-skilled or skilled workers; and approximately half the parents had less than a high school education.

Other Research

Our investigations of teacher training had immediate implications

and effects on the Demonstration School. Other research efforts conducted at KEEP have potential implications. A major area has been socio linguistics; in particular, the development of a performance measure of a child's use of Standard English.

Other projects, reported on in various Technical Reports, addressed the following topics:

1. Facilitating retention through contextual findings;
2. The teaching of English to HCE children;
3. The acquisition of plurality and tense by pidgin-speaking children;
4. The attributional explanation of academic performance;
5. Obtaining verbal responses from HA children;
6. The relationship of sibling caretaking to attentiveness to a peer tutor; and
7. The development of the Standard English Repetition Test.